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ABSTRACT

The staff development model at George Washington Junior High School (Ridgewood, New Jersey) recognizes teachers' personal needs and administrators' institutional needs, and deals with those needs via the staff development process at the building level. Prior to planning inservice programs, needs assessment was conducted by the principal and seven faculty members by using an open-ended opinionnaire to poll teachers' perceived staff development needs and reactions to the previous year's activities. Also identified were board of education and local school goals and assessed resources. Activities developed in response to these assessments included a human relations program continued from the previous year, a curriculum-based program, and a program that was managerial in focus. Also, an inservice program was developed to improve computer literacy, a concern of both teachers and administrators. Graphs are presented illustrating inservice needs identified by the teacher opinionnaire, and a copy of the questionnaire evaluating the efficacy of the computer training inservice program is appended. (JD)

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# THE GEORGE WASHINGTON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STAFF DEVELOPMENT MODEL

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ABSTRACT

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

STAFF DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Problem

Principals as school managers need to have in their management repertoire processes available to them such that they are able to respond effectively to external demands, board of education priorities, and perceived teacher needs. This paper reports how a junior high school has responded to school issues by developing a school-based staff development model.

Method

The staff development model has its theoretical roots in social systems theory and the organizational health notions of Mathew Miles and Chris Argyris. The model involves administrators and a committee of teachers who plan staff development activities in concert with staff needs, school district goals, and local school priorities.

Conclusion

The evaluation of the program suggests that teachers perceive programs to be very useful. One activity has resulted in 40% of the faculty in the school enrolling in an inservice course as a direct result of a committee planned activity.

# SCHOOL RENEWAL AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT:

# A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

An often used phrase in contemporary educational jargon is "school renewal." "School renewal," in one context, means a systematic, continuous process in which professionals improve their professional skills such that they are able to cope more effectively with school problems. In short, school renewal is really the process of school improvement. However, in order to facilitate the renewal process, school districts and state organizations in many instances tend to construct elaborate and often very impressive inservice programs that remove teachers from their buildings for training. In many situations this appears not to be an effective staff development model.

Emerging professional literature in the area of school renewal and educational effectiveness suggests that staff development programs that take professionals away from their school building, the students, and day-to-day problems inherent in school life are programs of little value, and in some cases these programs are actually counter-productive.

Goodlad (1970), for example, has discussed what he considers to be the counter-productivity of inservice. Goodlad finds these activities lacking because they take teachers away from school. He suggests that a major goal of curriculum workers should be to make schools self-renewing. That is, schools should work on problems as they are stated

by teachers by instituting a collaborative system for ongoing dialogue. Miles (1965), in discussing organizational health of schools, suggests that organizations must be effective, stable, and capable of responding to new demands. A healthy organization "not only survives its environment but continues to cope adequately over the long haul, and continuously develops and extends its surviving and coping activities. Shortrun operations on any particular day may be effective or ineffective, but continued survival, adequate coping, and growth are taking place" (p.17). Thus, if schools are expected to solve problems, cope with new demands, and remain in a healthy state, the resources to develop these capacities are best directed to the school building level.

The orientation of the staff development model reported in this paper is one that can be described as a building-based model. Since teachers and administrators are involved in a collaborative problem-solving process, conceptualizing the school as a social system is a useful framework for the model's theoretical design. The social systems model characterizes the school as a social system in which teachers and administrators interact as organizational members to solve problems. One aspect of the social systems model suggests that administrators bring their "institutional agenda" to school problem solving in the form of the superintendent's wishes, parental concerns, and state mandates. Teachers, on the other hand, bring their personal

agenda to school with items such as their personal needs for achievement, affiliation, and leadership. The staff development model employed in this paper is one that recognizes the personal needs of teachers and the institutional needs of administrators, ard deals with those needs via the staff development process at the building level.

While the social systems model is a useful framework in which to understand the relationship between the institution and the individual, the work group is the essential block in the foundation of the staff development process. Miles (1982), who has written extensively in this area, points out that the group, even though all issues do not enter its domain, is "the key unit in the larger organization" (p.51).

Thus, as Argyris (1964) suggests, the staff development model reported in this paper is one that has the potential to increase the capacity for problem solving in a school setting over time. In that sense, the organization can more effectively achieve school goals, maintain itself in a healthy state, and responds to external demands. The above can best be maximized in a school-based model which is a collaborative effort between teachers and administrators that responds to the institutional needs of administrators and the personal needs of teachers. The implementation of the staff development model can best be initiated in a group setting.

## THE COMMITTEE PROCESS

The staff development planning committee was assembled as part of a summer curriculum project that was funded by the Ridgewood Public School District. The purpose of the committee was to formulate staff development recommendations for the 1982-1983 school year. The committee consisted of the G.W. principal, and seven G.W. faculty members. Some of the members had practical experience in planning staff development activities.

The committee's task was to cull specific teacher suggestions and observable trends in teacher-identified needs and reactions to the previous year's staff development activities. An open-ended teacher opinionnaire was used by the committee to poll teacher's perceived staff development needs. The committee then identified Board of Education and local school goals that were targeted for the school level. The committee assessed the resources needed (personnel, equipment, etc.) to provide staff development support activities for each goal identified. Goals were prioritized using the criteria of faculty interest, school district priority, and community identified need (see Appendix).

The activities that were developed in response to faculty initiated concerns were a human relations program continued from the previous year, a curriculum-based program, and a program that was managerial in focus. One area of need that was identified consisted of elements that

were both the concern of teachers and that of the administration (computer literacy).

The committee process was one that did not need to trade off district, school, and individual issues. Many of the teacher-identified needs were consistent with those of the institution in general. In defining its tasks, the committee worked to maximize a variety of resources (faculty, community, academic). The committee dwelled on remaining alert to the charge to take the staff development renewal process further by developing programs and activities which would encourage teacher participation and reflect the perceived needs of teachers, pupils, and the community.

## INPLEMENTING THE MODEL: COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

### WHY COMPUTERS?

We are fortunate to be present at the birth of the Computer Age. However, as with the birth of a child, we are faced with the forbidding task of long range planning. All members of society will undoubtedly become computer literate to some degree. We, as educators of tomorrow's adults, must play an important role. Recognizing this, one of the goals of our school's staff development program is to make the faculty computer literate.

Since the introduction of the first computer course in 1965, Ridgewood has been recognized as one of a small number of school districts in the state and nation in the forefront of computer education development. Capping a fifteen year period of gradual, steady growth, the past two years have seen a rapid increase in interest and activity in the elementary and secondary schools. In the secondary schools we have seen an expansion of computer use, along with an acceleration of computer courses. This year our school opened a CAI Lab, adjacent to the computer room, establishing a computer complex housing 20 PET and Apple microcomputers and four terminals on line to the PDP 11 in the high school. Clearly, this was the time for considering the level of staff training, development, and involvement with computers.

STAFF INVOLVEMENT

Involvement began in the Spring of 1982, when the entire staff was asked to indicate their staff development needs and desires for the following school year. At this time, 70 percent of the staff indicated an interest in obtaining information about computers, their use in the classroom, and the computer program as offered to students in our school.(Fig. 1)

The staff development committee, which was discussed earlier, used the faculty's responses as the basis for planning a program. This program was to coincide with a major district wide goal, to develop a computer literate staff. It was each school's charge to see that this was carried out. With the staff need and interest apparent, we now focused on how best to deliver the information.

The committee and administration decided to begin with lending an entire school day, called appropriately Program Development Day, to computers. All staff members were required to attend.

The program was entitled "Computers: A New Age for G.W." and stressed

(1) The Ridgewood computer education program

(2) The G.W. program

(3) Computer terminology

(4) Computer Assisted Instruction

(5) Hands on participation

STAFF PLANNING

This day was carefully planned by teachers and administrators. It was designed to give all teachers some success in computer use. An attempt was made to personally involve each staff member in the program. In addition, we tried to organize the presentations so that they would have some relevancy for all curriculums. The committee understood that this day would determine further involvement of the staff with computers. The administration provided the support and was able to procure the needed hardware. At the end of the program a questionnaire was given to the faculty, asking not for an evaluation of the day that would come later, but rather what the faculty would like to see occur next concerning computer education. The overwhelming response was for an in-service course within their own school building.(Fig.2)

STAFF INVOLVEMENT

After the District In-Service Committee was advised of the GW faculty's needs, they enlisted two G.W. teachers with computer experience to offer an in-service course on computer familiarization within their own school environment. The school district saw to it that the needed

hardware was available, and also provided a budget for teachers' salaries and expenditures. Support came from all levels to make this project a success. Courses began within three weeks with an enrollment of twenty out of the forty who initially wanted to participate. We felt this represented a good percentage due to the short notice given for this after school course and the number of teachers already committed to previous activities. The in-service course will have a second session and will repeat in the spring if need and interest is evidenced. As each inservice course is completed, teachers will be involved in its evaluation and in the planning of the succeeding course.

Three weeks after Program Development Day, the administration presented the questionnaire that elicited personal responses to the material presented, its means of presentation and its applicability to teaching. The time lag was intentional because we felt teachers needed to reflect, review, and discuss the day. (Fig. 3)

Hopefully, we can say that with further effort and planning, and through the involvement of the entire school district, from the central administration, to the home school administration, to the classroom teacher, we will be on our way to becoming a computer literate faculty.

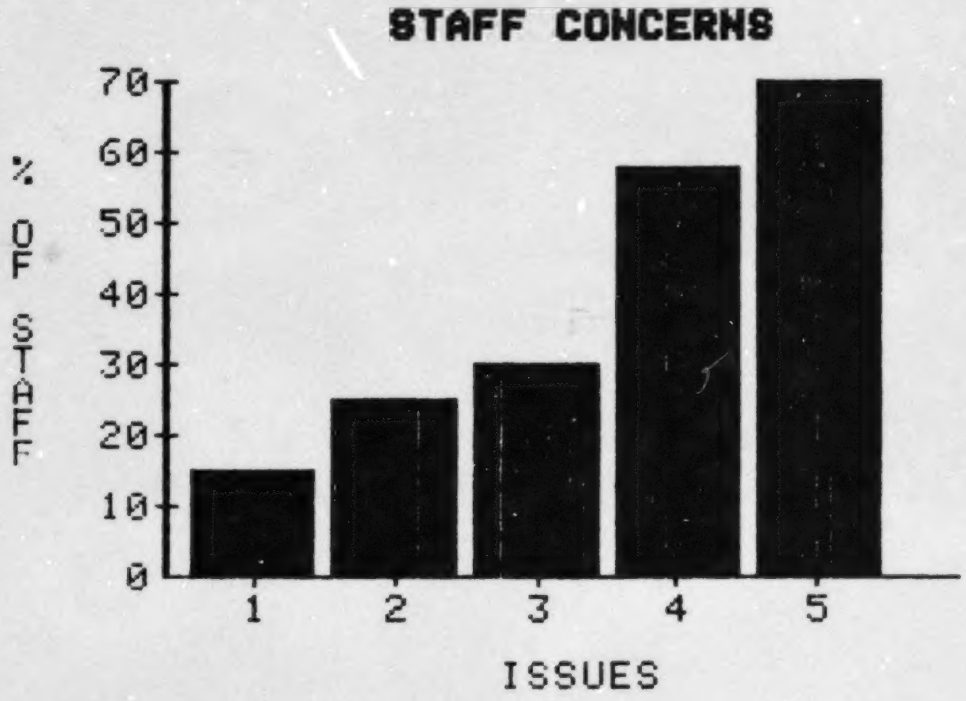


**FIGURE 1. Issues the G.W. Staff thought should be discussed during the 1982-1983 school year.**

1. Death and Dying
2. Writing and Composition Program
3. School Law
4. Minority Students
5. Computers and their Applications

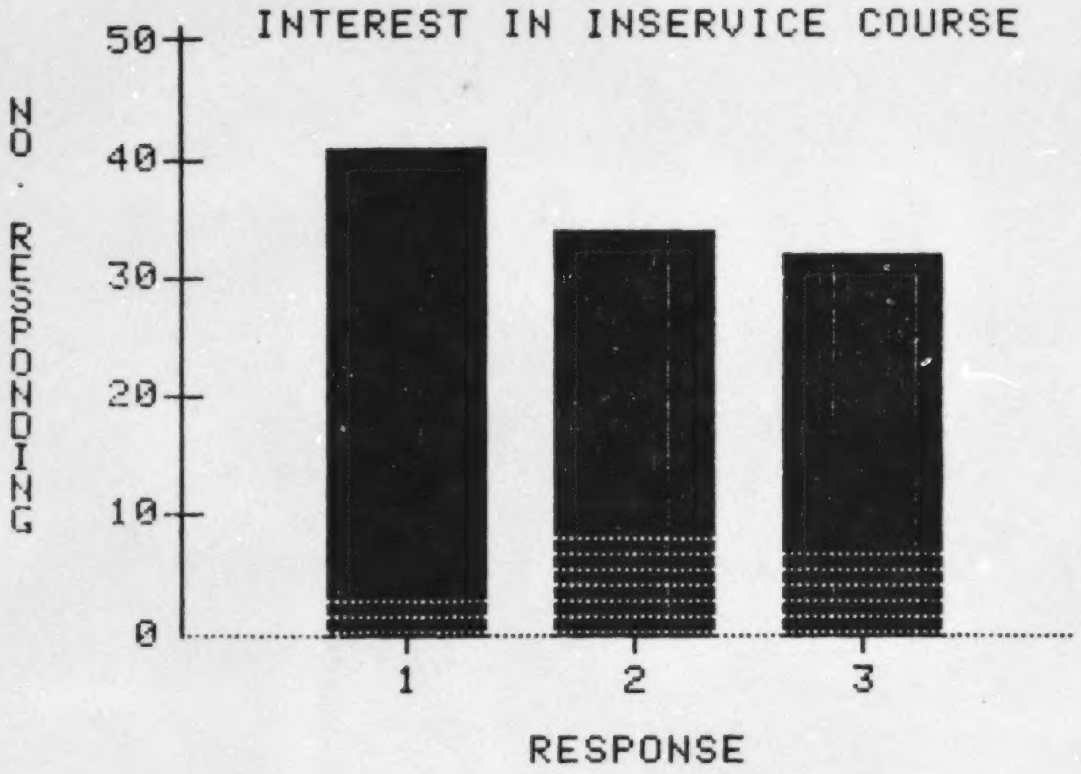


**FIGURE 2. Interest in Inservice Courses**
**Teachers were asked whether they had an interest in:**

1. **Word Processing**
2. **Programming**
3. **Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI)**

**Yes = solid bar, No = dotted line**

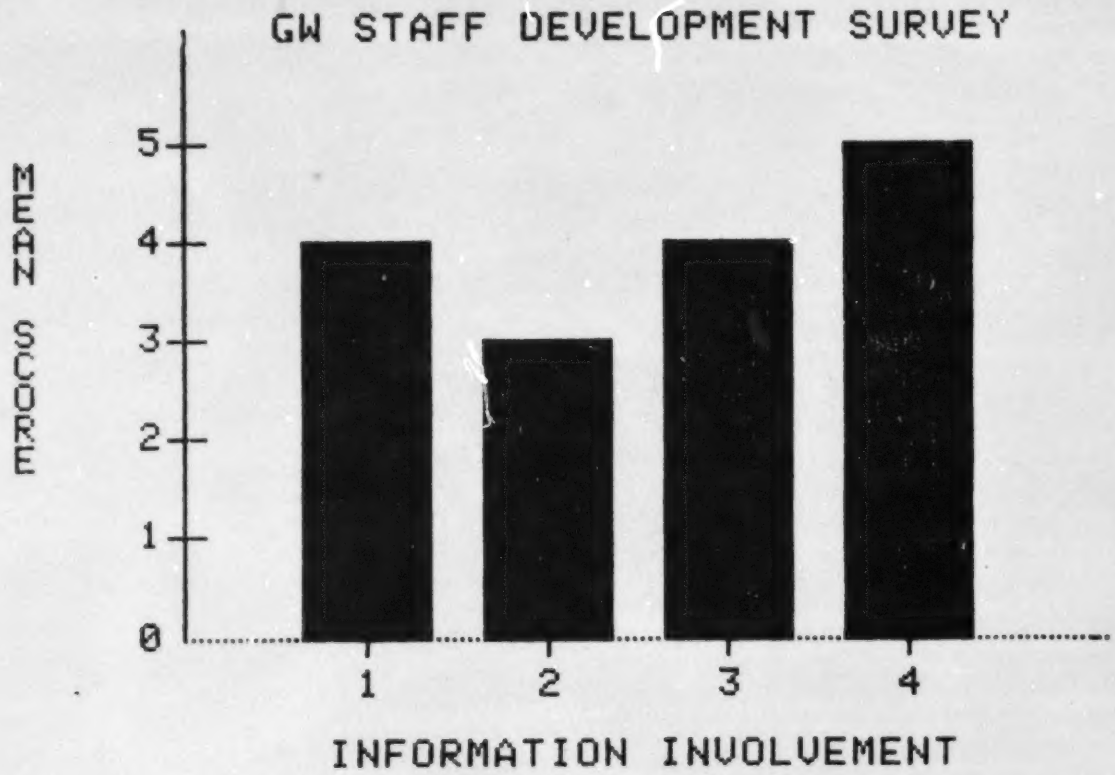


**FIGURE 3. Staff Development Questionnaire**

**1. To what extent did Professional Day provide you with useful information concerning computers ?**

**2. As a result of Professional Day, to what extent have you made use of the computer labs ?**

**3. To what extent do you feel that the GW staff had a role in Professional Day planning ?**

**4. To what extent do you feel the staff should have a role in planning Professional Day ?**

**Answers were scaled from 1 (almost none) to 5 (very great extent).**

## CONCLUSION

The theoretical base for the staff development process reported in this paper suggests that staff development should be school based, relevant to teachers' perceived needs, and related to organization goals. The model employed stresses high staff participation in assessing needs, planning activities, and evaluation. Preliminary evaluation data, as a result of teacher responses to a questionnaire instrument and the high percentage of teachers who have chosen to pursue inservice work as a direct result of the professional development day on computer technology, show that the staff development model at George Washington Junior High School, Ridgewood, New Jersey, is effective.

The staff development questionnaire which was administered to the faculty points out that to a great extent (4) professional development provided teachers with useful information with respect to computer technology. Teachers also responded that as a direct result of professional development day to some extent (3) they have made use of the computer facility available to them. Two other questionnaire items pointed out that while teachers perceive that they <u>should</u> have, to a very great extent (5) a role in planning professional development day, most felt they had significant role in planning (4). These results are summarized in Figure 3. In short, the gleaned data

cited above suggest that teachers who learned some new skills on professional day actually continued to use the computer facility.

Another form of evaluation which suggests the model is an effective one was that twenty teachers representing 40% of the faculty have enrolled and are presently taking an inservice course on computer technology.

## IMPLICATIONS

The staff development model reported in this paper is a process model. The model needs to be further refined. The committee needs to be more systematic in its needs assessment. Perhaps more student and community needs should be elicited by the committee in a more systematic way. In this regard student needs (we presently administer an attitude survey) data can be fed into the committee process. With regard to community needs, the committee might interview formal and informal leaders and parents to solicit their views on school issues.

Another area that needs to be considered is the role of the principal as the instructional leader of the school. The principal's role is undefined and ambiguous. Such issues as group membership, veto power, resource allocator,

and the principal as the representative of higher levels of administration need to be clarified.

Finally, the superintendent of schools has provided both financial resources and sanction for the staff development model. Other resources and commitments from the school district have been provided to the committee. The committee needs more resources for increased time for summer planning, an outside process consultant for external validation, and research and evaluation support for more systematic planning and program evaluation purposes.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Ronald Verdicchio is Assistant Principal at George Washington Junior High School in Ridgewood, New Jersey. He has an Ed.D. from Teachers College, Columbia University and has written articles and made presentations on the topic of organizational climate. Marjorie Dawson-Ford is a teacher of English at George Washington Junior High School and has been a member of several staff development committees at the district level in Ridgewood. Gail Finlay is Resource Room teacher at George Washington and is also responsible for the CAI Laboratory. She has used microcomputers as a learning aid in her classrooms since 1978.

## STAFF DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the information items below by circling the numbe..

Years in Teaching (1) 1-5 (2) 6-10 (3) more than 10

Degree Level (1) BA (2) M.A. (3) M.A. + 30/45 or Doctorate

Subject Taught (1) English-Social Studies (2) Math-Science
(3) Foreign Language (4) Elective (5) Other

| | | Almost None | | Some | | Very Great Extent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | To what extent did the G.W. Professional development day provide you with useful information with regard to computers and information technology? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | To what extent do you feel that computer education is a significant educational issue? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | To what extent do you feel that the staff at G.W. should make computer education a nigh priority for all staff members? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | To what extent do you feel that the G.W. staff had a role in planning the Professional development day program? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | To what extent do you feel that the G.W. staff should have a role in planning the Professional development day program? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | Almost None | | Some | | Very Great Extent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. | To what extent do you intend to pursue additional course work in computer education as a direct result of the Professional development day program at G.W.? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | To what extent do you feel that the knowledge and skills that you learned on Professional development day will have an impact on some aspect of your teaching? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. | To what extent did you personally feel involved in the Professional development day program? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. | As you understand it to what extent does the G.W. staff development committee represent your professional needs and interests? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. | To what extent do you feel that you can influence the staff development program at G.W. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | To what extent do you feel that the knowledge and skills that you learned on Professional development day can be applied to: | | | | | |
| 11. | Teacher preparation of learning activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. | Classroom management (grading record-keeping, etc.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. | Basic skill instruction | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | Almost None | | Some | | Very Great Extent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14. | Pupil performance analysis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. | Student learning styles | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. | Teaching advanced academic skills and competencies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. | To what extent is the G.W. school administration supportive of teacher-initiated staff development at the building level? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. | To what extent do staff development programs at the building level (such as the professional development day program) increase staff morale? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. | To what extent do you feel additional school programs (faculty meetings, ½ days, etc.) should be committed to total staff programs in computer education? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. | To what extent have <u>you</u> personally made use of either of the computer labs that are available to you and/or students as a direct result of professional day? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. | Please comment on any aspect of the profession development day program. | | | | | |